

Suicide Prevention for Family Members

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FAMILY SUPPORT

SUPPORT OUR FAMILIES AND OUR SOLDIERS - HELP PREVENT SUICIDE



Drew Carey
Comedian and TV Celebrity

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A Healthy Life



Stress and Guard Family Life

Stress related to a demanding Guard career

Stress related to balancing civilian and military career

Stress related to deployments

- Juggling new responsibilities and roles
- Fear of harm
- Single parenting
- Long separation
- Reintegrating with family



1SG Swanier (ret)
Veteran / PTSD Sufferer

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Coping Mechanisms - Adults

Resilient Strategies

- Talking to others
- Exercise
- Writing/journaling
- Cooking
- Spending time in nature
- Support groups
- Volunteer

Negative Strategies

- Not talking
- Withdrawing
- Eating in excess or not enough
- Self-injurious behaviors (e.g., cutting, drinking alcohol, taking pain killers, reckless driving, etc.)



Coping Mechanisms – Children/Adolescents

Resilient Strategies

- Talking to others
- Sports
- Drawing/journaling
- Reassurance/fun outings
- Church /school activities

Negative Strategies

- Not talking
- Withdrawing
- Drastic mood changes
- Self-injurious behaviors (e.g., cutting, risk-taking, drinking, taking pills)



BALANCING

Stressors



Resiliency



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BALANCING

Stressors

**Resiliency
Resources**



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Suicide



Kevin Hines
Mental Health Advocate
Suicide Survivor

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Suicide Facts: Youth*

- Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death among 10- to 24-year olds
- 4, 500 lives lost each year
- Each year, there are approximately 10 youth suicides for every 100,000 youth
 - For children ages 10 to 14, the rate of suicide was 1.3 per 100,000
 - For adolescents ages 15 to 19, the rate of suicide was 8.2 per 100,000

*CDC

Suicide Facts: Adults/Elderly*

- Suicide was the 11th leading cause of death for all ages
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among 25-34 year olds
- In 2005, more than 32,000 suicides occurred in the U.S.
 - 89 suicides per day
 - 1 suicide every 16 minutes
 - 11.01 suicides per 100,000

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*CDC

SD Army National Guard Suicide Statistics

- 5 completed suicides in past 5 years
- Last completed suicide April 2009
- 8 attempted or threatened suicides in past two years
- Unidentified numbers that are not reported to SDNG?
- Suicides Army wide are at an all time high

Risk Factors for Children and Adults

- Previous suicide attempts
- Close family member who has committed suicide
- Past psychiatric hospitalization
- Recent losses
 - Death of family member or friend
 - Family divorce/separation
 - Break-up with girlfriend/boyfriend
- Poor social skills
 - Difficulty interacting with others
 - Problems starting a conversation and making friends
- Drug or alcohol abuse
 - Drugs decrease impulse control making impulsive suicide more likely
 - Some try to self-medicate with drugs or alcohol
- Violence in the home or social environment
- Handguns in the home

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Eric Hipple

Lost a son to suicide

conversation and making friends

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Understanding Suicide

**Suicide is a complex issue.
The warning signs may not be easily identifiable.**

**Tell others
they need
help**

**Verbal
expression
of suicidal
thoughts
or actions**

**Giving away
possessions**

**Suddenly
making a
will**

**Signs of
alcohol and/or
drug use or
abuse
Isolation**

**Changes in
eating
habits**

**Sleep
pattern
changes**

Sad

Depressed

**Irritable,
short tempered**

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Warning Signs that a Child/Adolescent Needs Help

- Changes in sleep
 - Too little
 - Too much
- Changes in eating
 - Too little
 - Too much
- Irritability
- Hostile toward other children
- Withdraws from peers
- Gives away possessions
- Sad, depressed
- Talks about death
- Your child's teacher or other trusted adult tells you that your child is acting different and may need help



Eric Hipple

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Warning Signs that an Adult Family Member or Soldier Needs Help

- Changes in sleep
 - Too little
 - Too much
- Changes in eating
 - Too little
 - Too much
- Irritability
- Alcohol and/or drug use or abuse
- Isolation
- Giving away possessions/suddenly making a will
- Sad, depressed
- Thoughts of suicide/death
- Suicidal behaviors
- Coworkers, family, or friends tell you that you need help

Stigma



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1SG Cornel Swanier (ret)

1SG Swanier (ret).wmv

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Stigma and Career

The Secretary of Defense has successfully advocated a revised Question 21 of the SF86 Questionnaire for National Security Positions, which asks about mental health

Standard Form 86, Question 21 – Revised (Feb 2008)

Mental health counseling in and of itself is not a reason to revoke or deny a clearance.

In the last 7 years, have you consulted with a health care professional regarding an emotional or mental health condition or were you hospitalized for such a condition?

Answer "No" if the counseling was for any of the following reasons and was not court-ordered:

- ***strictly marital, family, grief not related to violence by you; or***
- ***strictly related to adjustments from service in a military combat environment.***

If you answered "Yes," indicate who conducted the treatment and/or counseling, provide the following information, and sign the Authorization for Release of Medical Information Pursuant to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Under Secretary of Defense
Intelligence

Under Secretary of Defense
Personnel and Readiness

What do you do if someone is suicidal?

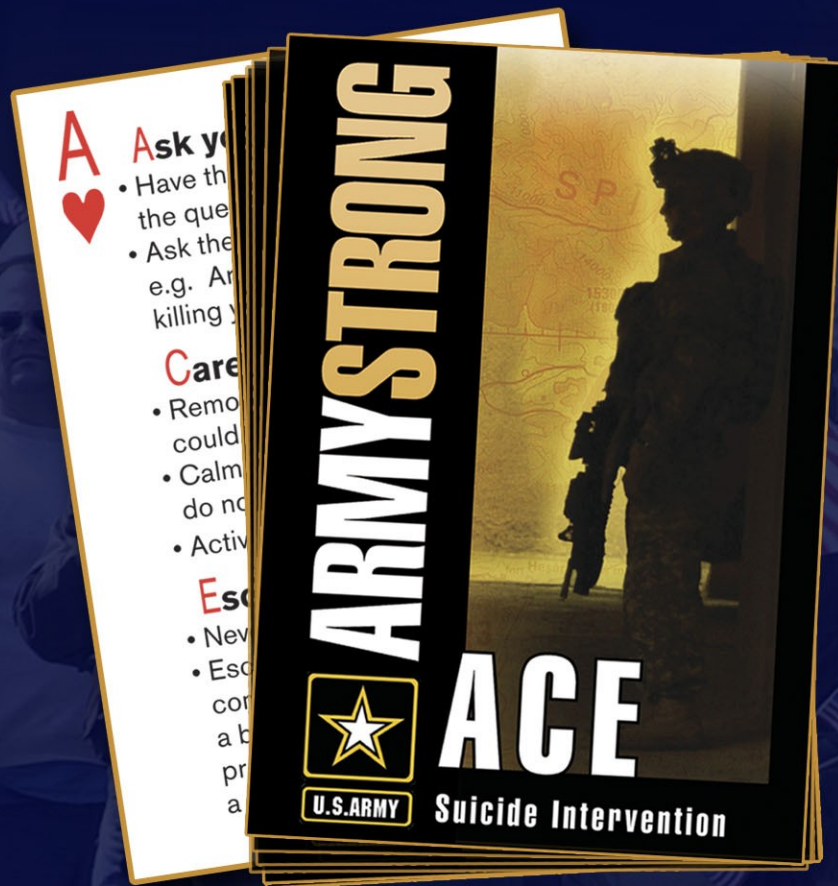


Kevin Hines

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Intervention: Be an ACE



A: Ask

- Ask the question directly and stay calm, e.g. Are you thinking of killing yourself? Do you want to die (youth)? Do you wish you were dead?

C: Care

- Remove any means that could be used for self-injury.
- Calmly control the situation; do not use force.
- Reassure that he or she will be helped.

E: Escort

- Never leave your Family member or friend alone.
- Escort to the emergency room, primary care provider, or behavioral health professional.

What is the SD National Guard doing to help prevent suicides?

- Created a Wellness Branch to address overall wellness
 - LTC Harvey Fitzgerald
- Appointed State Suicide Prevention Program Managers
 - Air National Guard: Chaplain (Maj) Dave Stevens
 - Army National Guard: MSG Leah Braun
 - Training unit-level personnel to chain-teach *prevention*
 - Training unit-level personnel to practice *intervention*
 - Training unit leaders to encourage those in need to seek help, to reduce stigma, to provide education, and to make resources available

Vignette 1

You are the friend of a 34-year-old Reserve Captain who has been passed over for a promotion. Your friend was unexpectedly called-up to deploy. He cannot afford to deploy because of his huge mortgage payment. If deployed, your friend would need to sell his house, because his Army pay would be inadequate to cover the mortgage. His spouse thinks he volunteered for deployment and threatens to leave him if he sells the house.

Vignette 2

Prior to her deployment, this 30-year-old, National Guard SSG had a violent verbal argument with her husband. After three months in theater, she finds that she is still haunted by her memory of this argument. There is no relief from her husband; each time she calls home, her husband begins to argue again. During her most recent phone call, her husband stated, "The kids really miss you. You are a bad mother for leaving your babies like this. You are useless as a mother." The SSG already feels powerless about her situation, and her husband's recent comments really hurt her.

Vignette 3

SPC Jones has returned from a 15-month deployment. When SPC Jones's brother stopped by to visit him, SPC Jones told him that his wife and their 11-month old baby are moving out, and she is filing for separation. SPC Jones has been drinking heavily and is having trouble making his rent and car payments. He has withdrawn from his friends and family and didn't attend his dad's 50th birthday party.



Vignette 4

John is a 30-year-old Specialist in the National Guard. He has just returned from his first deployment in Afghanistan. During this deployment, he received an Article 15 for insubordination. John just discovered that his girlfriend has been unfaithful and no longer wants to see him. He was very embarrassed by the Article 15, and now he is feeling quite sad about losing his girlfriend.



Conclusion



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Your Local Resources

- Community Mental Health Clinics
- School Counselors
- Church/Chaplains - SD Full time Support Chaplain (LTC) Lynn Wilson 605.737.6009
- Family Readiness Groups
- Chain of Command
- Directory of SD Resources
 - <http://www.sdsuicideprevention.org/>



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Local Resources Continued

- Veteran's Affairs Suicide Prevention Coordinators
 - Rapid City – Cheryl Michaels 605.490.0098
 - Sioux Falls – Janelle Christianson 605.336.3230
 - Additional Veteran's Affairs Counselors available in Hot Springs and Ft. Meade
- Vet Centers – Sioux Falls, Rapid City, and Martin
- Military Family Life Consultant (MFLC) - 605.737.6293



More Resources

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK
- Military OneSource
 - www.militaryonesource.com or 1-800-342-9647
- Troop and Family Counseling Services: 888-755-6669
- National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center
 - <http://www.safeyouth.org>
- Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine (CHPPM)
 - <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil>